

# Plan Lee Highway (PLH) Working Group (WG) Meeting Summary

May 8, 2019; 5 – 7 pm

2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Room 311

## Subject: April Neighborhood Focus Groups and Existing Conditions Analysis

WG Members in attendance: Paul Holland (Chair), Sandra Chesrown, Richard Price, Scott Pedowitz, Ginger Brown, Saundra Green

Staff Team Members in attendance: Heidi Mitter, Joel Franklin, Zach Larnard, Gladis Bourdouane, Cynthia Liccese-Torres, Tim Murphy, Naudy Martinez, Serena Bollinger, Kelly Cornell, Leon Vignes, Kellie Brown, and Natasha Alfonso-Ahmed

### Meeting Overview

- Agenda
- Welcome and opening remarks provided by WG Chair.
- Staff communicated key [findings](#) from the April neighborhood focus group meetings, which detailed initial community input received on priorities, preferences, and perspectives of neighborhoods individually. In addition, staff provided an update on the upcoming community engagement efforts which include interviews with developers and property owners (as part of the Housing Analysis); an educational forum on land use and HCD Update; and, described next steps to conduct a survey to encourage people to sign up for future neighborhood-based focus groups. Staff also communicated minor revisions made to the Summary Report, which details community input received at the Kick Off events held in January (first Community Forum (CF) meeting) and February (Community Kick Off meeting).
- The Plan Lee Highway consultants (AECOM) presented and facilitated discussion on parts of the Existing Conditions analysis related to Land Use, Housing, and Transportation elements.

### Discussion Topics and Comments/Questions

#### April Neighborhood Focus Group Meetings

- A suggestion was made for staff/others to encourage people who receive focus group meeting announcements to forward future announcements to others with the goal of broadening awareness of meetings. *Staff noted that focus group meetings are intended to be small, in size, to encourage focused discussion and detailed feedback. If the size of the focus groups is too large, then it becomes difficult to manage and additional staff and consultant resources will be needed to facilitate the discussions. Staff also noted that the survey responses should help with refining the distribution lists for future meetings with individual neighborhoods and groups of neighborhoods, which is important when planning for these meetings in advance and assessing the appropriate type of engagement, including small focus groups or larger, open community meetings.*

- The WG requested that invitations to focus group meetings be sent at least two weeks in advance.
- In the responses to the question about significant sites, buildings, events, and stories, please clarify location of Quality Car Care at Westover S.C., Westover Hospital, and Native America Colonia Farming? *Staff will review the written survey responses from the focus group meetings to try to clarify these sites.*

### **Existing Conditions Report**

- Is it appropriate to share the draft report outline with other people outside the working group? The purpose of sharing the draft report outline with the working group is to provide an understanding of the topics and analysis the report is intended to address. WG members are welcome to ask others beyond the WG if anything may be missing; however, the report outline is an early draft and will continue to evolve as the consultants develop a more refined organizational structure for the report.

**Land Use:** The presentation on land use focused on key considerations based on community feedback, existing GLUP designations and zoning districts, areas of inconsistency, and next steps in analysis.

- It is important to examine potential GLUP and zoning inconsistencies more closely, and consider which designation is preferred and whether a change is needed to meet the desired vision for a particular section of the Lee Highway corridor.
- Inconsistencies, however, should not be overemphasized as it is not unusual for the zoning to allow something different than the GLUP designation for a particular area. It was noted that the zoning district communicates the by-right permissions for development on a specific parcel. Meanwhile, the GLUP designation and policies communicates the long-term vision.
- A WG member asked whether staff will present details about existing zoning district regulations at the upcoming land use educational forum. *Staff plans to present fundamental information about the by-right and special exception regulations for development in each of the zoning districts located on the Lee Highway corridor. Staff also plans to show visual examples to help people understand the concepts.*
- A WG member asked staff to clarify how an overlay may be used. *Plan Lee Highway may recommend that certain areas need new/additional zoning tools to achieve plan goals. Typically in Arlington, the GLUP indicates high level policy guidance and indicates where new, alternative zoning tools may be used for development/redevelopment. This approach could potentially be a recommendation of the Plan Lee Highway process; however, more information about the vision is needed before certainty about implementation tools can be determined. Furthermore, the specific implementation details would be determined through a separate, follow on process after a plan and new policies are adopted.*

**Housing:** The presentation on housing focused on key considerations based on community feedback, existing housing typologies, the location of CAF units, existing County policies and tools, case studies, and next steps in analysis.

- How are low and mid-rise buildings defined? The consultant noted that typically in construction low is 0-4 stories, mid is 5-8 stories, and high is over 8 stories, which is based on the type of construction (i.e. wood, wood and concrete, or concrete and steel). It was noted that it's

important for the community to share a common understanding of the different height thresholds under consideration during the planning process.

- It was noted that a clear definition to establish a common understanding of height, in the planning area, will be needed. The consultant also noted that there are other ways to define the height of a building. Height can be measured in feet, for example. Site elevation and the varying topography along the Lee Highway corridor, should be taken into consideration when determining how to define height. From a construction standpoint, the definition should also align with the thresholds identified through the economic analysis.
- At the land use educational forum, the most important message to impart is why a “do-nothing” approach is not appropriate. Change is happening and will continue to happen. It will be important to say how we want to see change happen.
- The WG requested to indicate the neighborhood in which each existing building (with CAF units) shown is located.
- The WG requested to provide details on all CAF buildings on the corridor.
- It was noted that not all the examples of small apartment buildings that were shown are affordable. The housing type, however, is still more affordable to a wider range of income levels.
- A slide to address planning for new public facilities with new housing growth should be provided.
- Case studies and more information on best practices for addressing the need for more housing affordable to a wider range of income levels should be provided.
- More relevant examples, such as four-plex buildings, should be provided.
- More examples of what we have already on the corridor that meets the needs of a wide range of income levels should be provided.

**Transportation:** The presentation on transportation focused on key considerations based on community feedback, Lee Highway street sections, speeds, collision patterns, VDOT requirements and functional classifications, Arlington street typologies, the need to find areas of flexibility, and next steps in analysis.

- Will we be looking at what can happen if the County takes control of Lee Highway? Staff noted that first we need to look at where the issues are, where the County’s design guidance is not in alignment with VDOT’s standards and determine where there is flexibility and where there is not. Lee Highway is a US Highway and even if the County took over the road, there may still be constraints on what can be done.
- Will we be looking at another guidance for the design of the roadway like NACTO? The consultant noted that NACTO is not part of the regulatory framework for roadway design, however, it does a great job of showing alternative options that are not always in direct conflict with AASHTO and sometimes offer guidance where AASHTO has gaps.

Why are we looking at autonomous vehicles? The consultant noted we need to make sure we are not precluding potential future modes of travel in our analysis. While we will not spend a lot of time analyzing this, we need to understand what it might mean in future land use scenarios in terms of parking and usage of the road.

### **Scheduling of Next Steps**

- The next WG meeting is planned for June to continue review of the Existing Conditions analysis. This meeting date and time will be confirmed.